Making farmers self-reliant

402. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to sate:

(a) whether Government are aware that shortage of food in the country is due to neglect of farmers;

(b) whether Government are also aware that about 660 million farmers in the country are not only food producers but consumers also;

(c) whether there is any policy to address the problems faced by farmers for making them self-reliant; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) to (d) Based on the monthly per capita quantity of consumption of Cereals and Pulses as per NSS 55th Round Report (1999-2000) and the population projections given by the Registrar General of India, the projected consumption of foodgrains in 2005-06 is 194.61 million tones which includes seed, feed and wastage. As per the 4th Advance Estimates released on 15th July, 2006, the foodgrain production in 2005-06 is estimated at 208.30 million tones. The farmers in the country are food producers and consumers.

Government is implementing a number of schemes for development of the agriculture sector, and thereby to make the farmers self reliant. The strategies formulated by the Government for making the agriculture sector more vibrant and dynamic so as to increase its production and productivity with resultant increase in the income of farmers include (i) enhancing institutional credit flow to the farmers and strengthening of cooperative credit structure; (ii) ensuring the timely availability of quality inputs; (iii) promoting farmer friendly, demand driven agriculture extension system; (iv) accelerating diversification to high value crops including horticulture activities; (v) strengthening infrastructure and the supply chain; (vi) optimizing the efficient utilization of available water resources through micro irrigation and enhancing the sustainability of dry-land/rain fed farming system; (vii) reforming agricultural markets, and widespread use of post harvest technology; and (viii) putting in place a broader spectrum of risk management apparatus for farmers.